

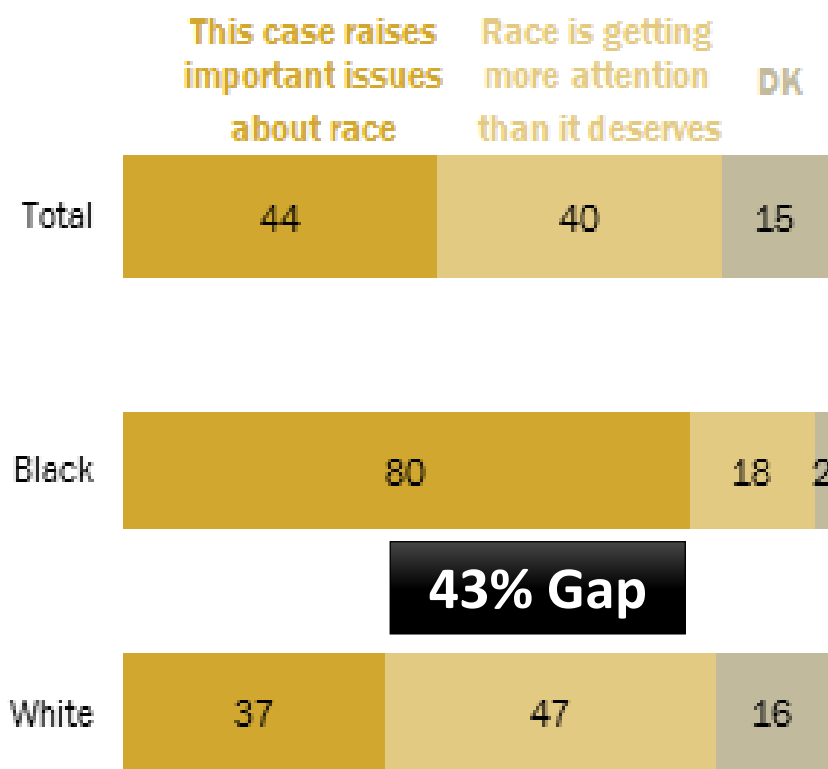
Worldview and an Existential Lens in Interpretations of Race-Related Events

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Blacks More Likely than Whites to Say Brown's Shooting Raises Racial Issues

Thinking about the police shooting of an African American teen in Ferguson, Missouri, percent saying ...

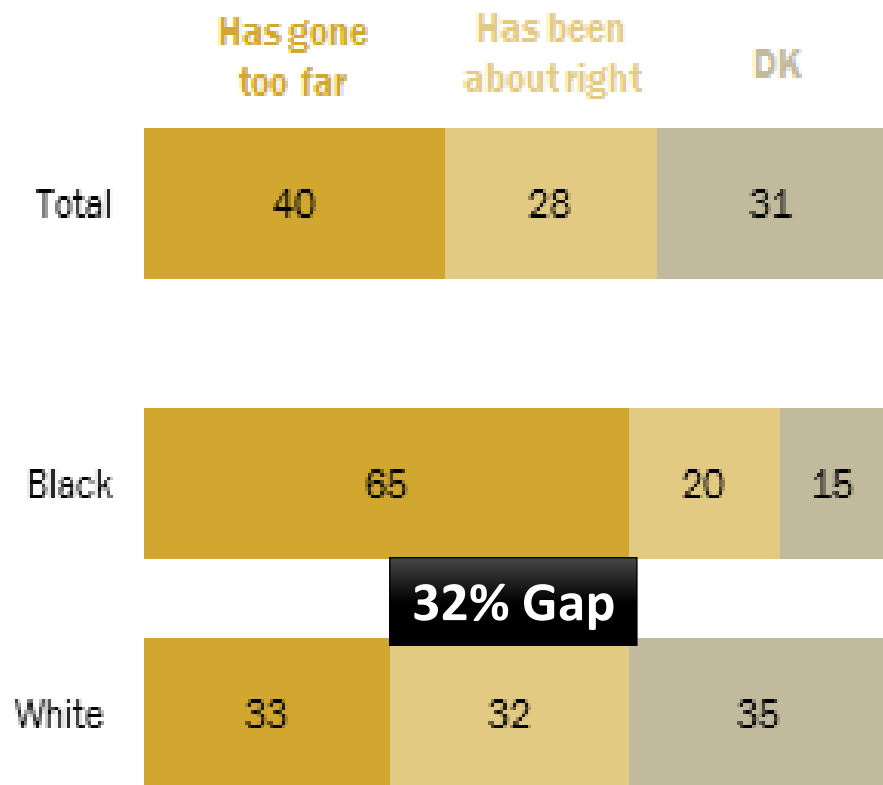


Survey conducted August 14-17, 2014. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Whites Divided in Views of Police Response to Ferguson Shooting

% saying police response to shooting ...



Survey conducted August 14-17, 2014. Whites and blacks include only those who are not Hispanic. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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Privilege & Oppression

Race

Worldview

History

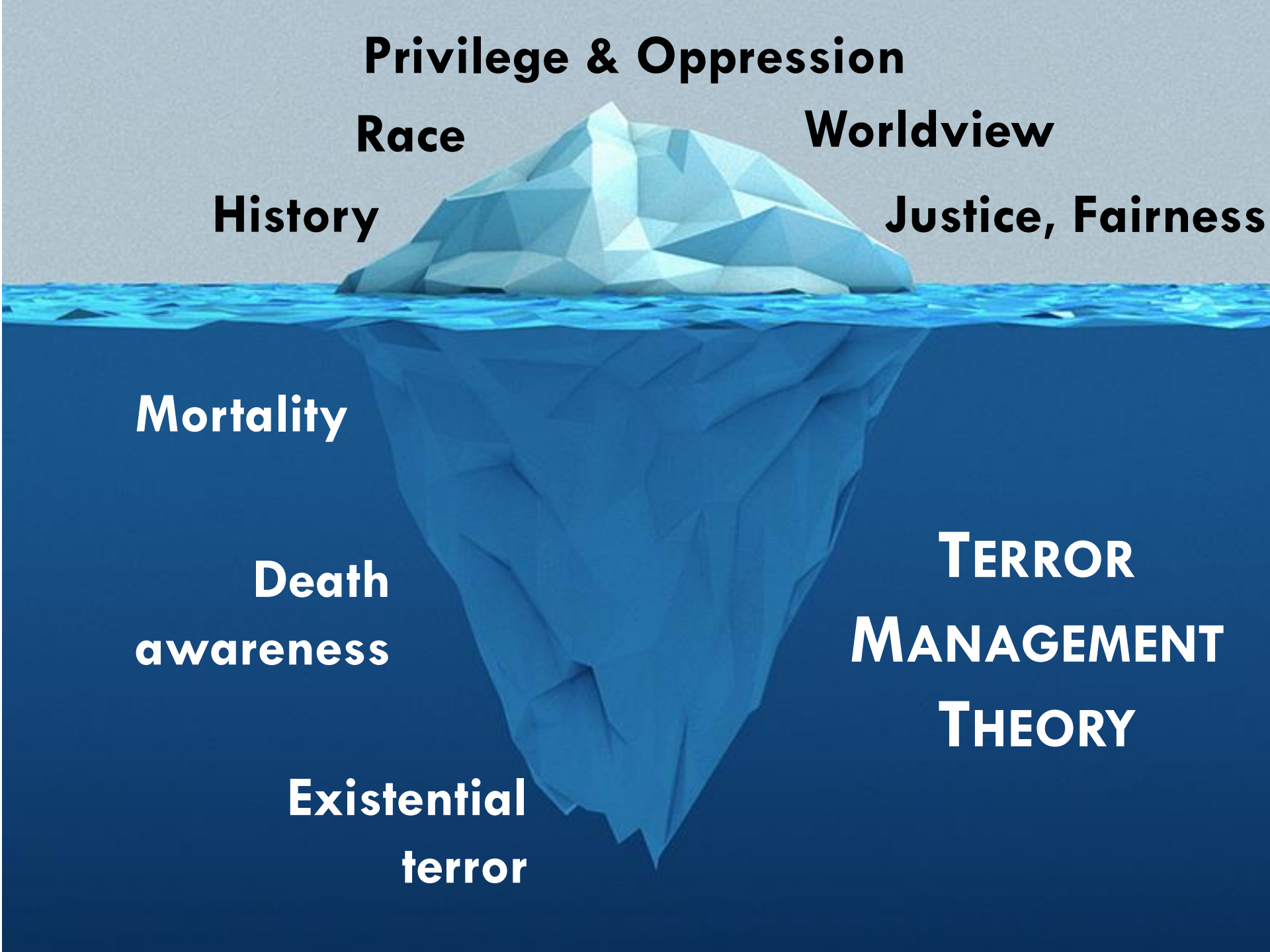
Justice, Fairness

Mortality

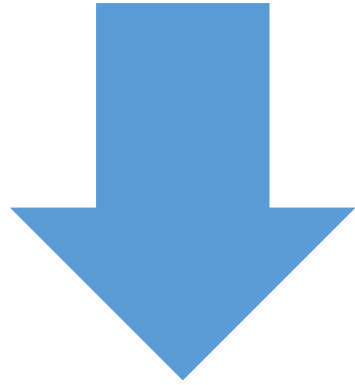
**Death
awareness**

**Existential
terror**

**TERROR
MANAGEMENT
THEORY**



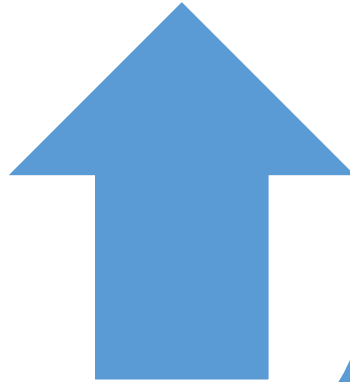
The Dilemma



Psychological
awareness of
death



Biological
drive for
life



The Resolution

Culture

- Meaning (Worldview)
- Value

The Threats

Mortality Salience
Alternate Worldviews

The Experimental Design

Leads to FEAR & ANXIETY

The Research

In response to out-group/worldview-threatening others, mortality salience tends to increase:

- **In-group favoritism and out-group derogation** (e.g., tolerance of hate crimes)
- **Aggressive behavior**
- **Collective categorization**
- **Stereotyped thinking**
- **Punitive social judgments**



Real World Themes that May Emerge in Response to Race-Related Events



- Depression, Anxiety
- Invalidation
- Mistrust
- Aggression, Violence
- Separation
 - Physical
 - Psychological
- Prejudice, Discrimination

Good News

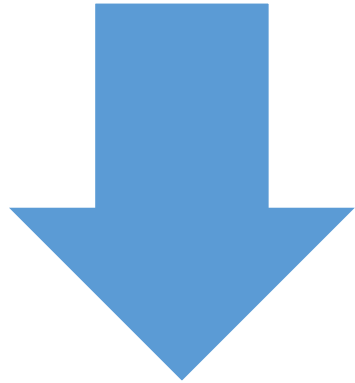
Death reminders (and related anxiety & fear) do not always lead to negative outcomes. It depends on an individual's worldview.



Mortality Salience can lead to positive, desirable outcomes if:

- **Worldview is accepting of diversity,**
- **Tolerance is primed, and/or**
- **In-group/out-group delineations are more inclusive.**

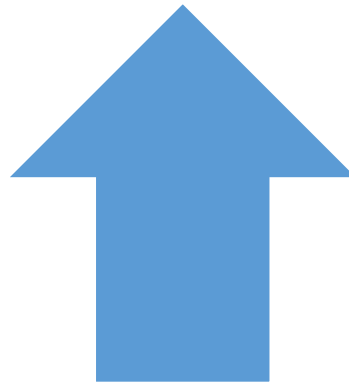
The Dilemma



Psychological awareness of death



Biological drive for life



WILL NOT CHANGE

CAN CHANGE

The Resolution

Culture

- Meaning (Worldview)
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The Threats

Mortality Salience

Alternate Worldviews

WILL NOT CHANGE

Key Takeaways



Reminders of mortality trigger important changes in how we think and behave.

Key Takeaways



Fear and anxiety impact perceptions, realities, and meaning-making.

Inclusivity, acceptance, and empathy are powerful.



Applications

- **Increase flexibility, inclusivity, and breadth of worldview**
 - Cooperative interaction among diverse groups
 - Safe and positive exposure to diversity
 - Introducing and discussing different perspectives/worldviews
 - Discouraging “colorblindness”

Applications

- **Deepen understanding of others' thoughts and behaviors**
 - How is their worldview impacting their perceptions? Behaviors?
 - How might their behaviors be considered attempts to attain value according to own meaning-making systems?
 - What may be their reminders of mortality?
 - In-group/out-group delineations:
 - Which may be salient for them in general?
 - What MS-provoking situations may evoke a given in-group identity?
 - How might this impact their social perceptions and behavior?

What about you?
Increase self-awareness

Recommended Authors & Readings



- **Jeff Greenberg, Tom Pyszczynski, and Sheldon Solomom**
- **Irvin Yalom** – Existential Psychotherapy, Love's Executioner
- **Viktor Frankl** – Man's Search for Meaning
- **Rollo May** – Love and Will

Thank you

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UMSL



Questions?

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